

# **East Greenwich School Committee**

**Tuesday, May 18, 2010**

**Hanaford School Cafeteria**

**200 Middle Road**

**East Greenwich, RI 02818**

**ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA MAY BE SUBJECT TO A VOTE**

**6:00p.m. Executive Session, RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) Collective Bargaining Issues Re: Teacher's Contract, Collective Bargaining Custodial Contract**

**7:00p.m. Regular Meeting**

## **I. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**The May 18, 2010 School Committee meeting was held at the Hanaford School. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Chair JeanAnn Guliano called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m. Also present were Vice-Chair, Anne Palumbo, Susan Records, Robert Durant, as well as Maryanne Crawford, Director of Administration and Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Robert Wilmarth, Director of Administration. Mrs. Winters, Mrs. Gifford and Mr. Martin were absent.**

## **II. Public Comments**

## **III. Recognitions**

**a. Lou Lepry, former East Greenwich Principal, was recognized for being inducted into the RI Interscholastic League High School Athletic Hall of Fame.**

**b. The following Avenger Athletes were recognized for earning**

**All-State recognition from the Providence Journal. Boys Indoor Track, Nick Ross - 1st Team All State; Girls Indoor Track-Kimberly Ezeama-1st Team All-Division**

**c. The following Cole students were recognized for being chosen to represent Cole at the PS 2010 Art Exhibit at URI Providence Campus: Anna Gibson, Stephanie Field, Evan Carpenter, Claire Ryan, Phoebe Osterhout, Anoush Calikyan, Ebed Jarrell, Jonathan Volpe and Catherine Karabasi.**

**d. The following Cole French students were recognized for winning awards in the National French Contest: Ella Myette-4th place in RI and 7th nationally; Antoine Emery-6th place in RI and 9th nationally; Andrew Miner-6th place in RI and 9th nationally; Sarah Shoer-7th place in RI and 10th nationally; Abbey Warren-7th place in RI and 10th nationally; Maggie Gallogly-10th place in RI; Topaz Leshin-Szewczok-10th place in RI; and John Sloat-8th place in RI.**

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

**a. On a motion made by Mr. Durant and seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the May 4 regular and executive session minutes.**

#### **V. Superintendent's Report**

**Dr. Mercurio stated that eight Cole Middle school teachers were involved in writing a grant for technology. They received this grant and he thanked Donna Hayes and members of the Technology for their work. He also noted that he was invited by the Commissioner of Education to participate in a round table discussion concerning Race To The Top grant application. The Superintendent also thanked the**

**administration, faculty and staff for a great prom.**

## **VI Action Items**

**a. On a motion made by Mrs. Records and seconded by Mrs. Palumbo, the committee voted unanimously to approve the Leave of Absence Extension for Christina O'Day, from May 17, 2010 until June 7, 2010.**

**b. On a motion made by Mr. Durant and seconded by Palumbo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Master Equipment Lease/Purchase Agreement and related instruments in connection with the financing of the acquisition of a language media resource center**

**c. On a motion made by Mr. Durant and seconded by Mrs. Palumbo, the committee voted unanimously to approve the Home School Plan for a 4th grade student from February 9, 2010 until the end of the school year, June 23, 2010**

**On a motion made by Mr. Durant and seconded by Mrs. Palumbo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the following field trips:**

**d. Out-of-State field trip to Mystic Aquarium in Conn. for Cole 7th grade Green Team on May 24, 2010**

**e. Out-of-State field trip to Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA for Cole 8th grade Spanish students on May 26, 2010**

**f. Out-of-State field trip to Plymouth Plantation in Mass. for grade 5**

**students at Hanaford**

**School on 6-15-10**

## **VII. Discussion Items**

### **a. Outsourcing of Custodians**

**Mrs. Crawford stated that in March at the request of the School Committee, she went out to bid for the outsourcing of custodians. Bids were received from ESC and SSC on April 16th and she was advised by School Committee to proceed with interviews. She stated that SSC was the top candidate and they have extensive experience in the K-12 environment. By going with this company the school department can save considerable money. In the first year, we would have to pay unemployment and re-training costs, but we'll still see a savings. It was noted that the severance pay will include retraining with the RI Trades Center in Quonset. The savings in the remaining two years will be more. Mrs. Crawford noted that the current costs for custodians and maintenance now is \$1.6 million; with \$1.2 million just for custodians. Henry Kates from the Finance Committee stated that Quonset is looking for welders and pipe-fitters and will provide job placement. The Department of Labor and Training has many certified re-training facilities. Mrs. Crawford stated that SSC has received glowing reviews from other school departments and feels it will be a good seamless transition. Tom Stocker from the Finance Committee stated that both companies interviewed well. It was noted that SSC will do random drug testing as well as resolve any problems we may have with employees. They will also give a representation certificate from their attorney as to any pending litigation. We are able to visit**

**schools in East Lyme, CT and the town offices in East Providence where they work. It's important we get to a decision by July 1st.**

**Mr. John Leidecker from NEA stated that he differs with some of Mrs. Crawford's conclusions and assumptions. He asked the School Committee not to privatize. He noted that he knows the Committee doesn't have a problem with the quality of work. He added that the union can't make enough concessions to make a difference. Mr. Leidecker stated that Sodexo didn't measure up to their problems and they offered lower wages to our employees. He feels we will lose a dedicated work force. The data indicates that when wages are low, people don't access a company's benefits. This translates into a transient work force. He noted that some custodians have been here for over 25 years, some live in East Greenwich, and they have had two years without a wage increase. He added they agreed to a higher health care contribution. He added these people are not a line item, they are fathers, mothers, etc. and the chances of getting a job for many of them is not the same as for a younger person. The decision will make an enormous difference on many of them. He stated that these employees need to be retained. Mr. Robert Coutu, Head Custodian, at Meadowbrook, stated that he has received many emails from parents and a very touching letter from a child. They all do what they do for the teachers, children, and taxpayers.**

**Judi Cavanaugh, Co-President of the teacher's union, stated that custodians have made many concessions and when they bargain the answer is to get rid of them. She doesn't feel she will be telling her bargaining unit to make concessions. She asked if we can put a price**

tag on children's safety. Mr. Robert Dilorio, Cole Head Custodian, stated that custodians also make minor repairs, which saves the School Department money. We will not get that with these companies. Mrs. Guliano stated that the Committee will make a decision very quickly. They plan to visit the schools in Connecticut where one of the companies has works. She stated the School Committee will take a vote on June 1st. She also noted that they appreciate the letters and emails and it is not an easy decision for them. Mrs. Guliano noted that they expect deeper cuts brought about by financial issues but not just a financial decision. Mr. Durant stated that \$411,000 has to be made up and they have to look at the whole picture. A parent asked if communication could be given to the public and the press concerning Mrs. Crawford's numbers, and also on the visit to Connecticut.

#### **b. High School Update**

The Teen Leadership Consortium students spoke to the Committee and gave a re-cap on their previous presentation. Drew Mahoney stated that another group will be selected to continue on. He presented a chart that has different solutions to their school and community concerns. One of their concerns was to have increased lunch time but Aramark was not responsive to extending the time because it would add to their labor budget. Another concern was to start school later and get out later but this will impact the bus schedule. Mrs. Guliano stated that a transportation work group will look into this for 2011 when the new middle school is ready. Dr.

**Mercurio noted that NEASC will come in to look at how we schedule advisory and ways are being explored on how to look at it. Mr. Houghtaling stated that the new group will include a broad base of kids.**

**Mrs. Nota, High School Principal, stated that the 0.5 technology credit is a state requirement. She has nine classes that qualify for this credit and there are ample opportunities. She added that courses outside of the high school open up a can of worms, and there is no way for the high school to know if the course transfers. Dr. Mercurio stated that virtual high school is the first step. She plans to put out a survey to the faculty and she noted that any changes to the schedule have to be approved by 70% of the faculty. Mrs. Nota stated that changing advisory impacts a lot and she is trying to balance everything. She added that East Greenwich High School is a very successful high school and some stress comes along with that.**

**c. New Life Worship Center rental**

**It was noted that this group is paying their rental bills but there is a concern about their advertisements as a church. Some of their members are telling people they can't use the parking lot at the high school during their service and that is not true since the lot is open to the public.**

**d. UCOA**

**This has been going on for two to three years and not ready for East Greenwich to use. Dr. Mercurio stated that the chart is at RIDE waiting to load to MUNIS.**

**e. Superintendent Evaluation**

**Mrs. Records asked if the tool she used was appropriate. The consensus is yes. The tool will be distributed to each School Committee member.**

**f. Technology Plan**

**Dr. Mercurio noted that he presented the plan to the Building Committee. He is looking for clarity as to what needs to be tweaked and what needs to be there for infrastructure. We will use the new middle school as a model. Mrs. Records stated that we may need new equipment and that's not in the plan. Dr. Mercurio stated there is no direct connection with the curriculum now. He added that we currently run two operating systems with a series of different Macs, and there is more than just placing systems in schools. Dr. Mercurio stated that we'll start with what we have in the classroom as far as driving curriculum and we need appropriate people to watch that. There are concerns about a budget. Mr. Durant noted there is concern that we make sure the high school is on board when we come up with a plan for Cole. Part of it is the funding issue. Dr. Mercurio noted that New England Tech is coming here and we need to forge a partnership with them.**

**g. Technology Outsourcing**

**Mrs. Guliano stated that now that we have a technology plan in place we can look at what can be used from the outside. She suggests setting up a short term group to look at options. We need to do more research. We'll look at setting up this group for September. Jack Sommer and Steve Miranda from the finance Committee will be on the committee. Mr. Nettik asked for clarification about outsourcing. Mrs.**



**Guliano stated that it may be a fact finding mission. Mr. Nettik would like to be a part of this.**

**h. Fields Project Update**

**A company is working on punch list items now. It requires more on the part of the town. The baseball field may be ready for Saturday's senior game. We need an okay from the bonding company for the turf field.**

**i. FY 2011 Budget**

**Mrs. Guliano stated that we are trying to push the funding formula through this year. The RIDE formula is the one they are looking at.**

**VIII. School Committee Concerns-There were no concerns.**

**IX. On a motion made by Mr. Durant and seconded by Mrs. Records, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Virginia Giuliani**